

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 ANKARA 4606

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PORS, TU, US, IR, IZ, SY, UK, UR
SUBJECT: KURDISH ACTIVITIES BECOME SUBJECT OF INTENSE MEDIA
AND PUBLIC INTEREST

REF: A) BAGHDAD 1227, B) TEHRAN 5511, C) TEHRAN 5345

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: RECENT VISITS TO SOUTHEASTERN TURKEY BY
PRIMIN ECEVIT AND HIGH-LEVEL MILITARY OFFICIALS AND PRESS
REPORTS CONFIRM WIDESPREAD PUBLIC FEELING THAT KURDISH
SEPARATIST ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION MAY BE ON THE RISE AND
THAT KURDS FROM IRAQ ARE BATTLING ON TURKISH TERRITORY.
TRADITIONALLY, TURKS HAVE BEEN RELUCTANT TO ADMIT THERE MAY
BE TROUBLES AMONG ETHNIC KURDS LIVING IN TURKEY OR TO DISCUSS
KURDISH CONFLICTS IN IRAN AND IRAQ WHICH HAVE SPILLED OVER
INTO SOUTHEASTERN TURKEY. OVER THE PAST TWO WEEKS, IN A SERIES
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OF FRONT PAGE ARTICLES AND EDITORIALS, HOWEVER, "HURRIYET"
TURKEY'S LARGEST CIRCULATION DAILY NEWSPAPER, HAS ACCUSED
IRAN AND ITS INTELLIGENCE ARM, SAVAK, OF BACKING A KURDISH
SEPARATIST GROUP, KAWA. "HURRIYET" HAS ALSO BLAMED SAVAK, THE
CIA, KGB AND SYRIAN AGENTS WITH INVOLVEMENT IN CLASHES
BETWEEN BARZANI AND TALABANI FORCES IN TURKEY'S FAR SOUTHEASTERN
HAKKARI PROVINCE. AMPLIFYING ON THE "HURRIYET" CAMPAIGN, LEFTIST

EDITORIALISTS HAVE LASHED OUT AGAINST SAVAK AND RENEWED CLAIMS THAT OTHER INTELLIGENCE ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING THE CIA, SUPPORT SEPARATIST MOVEMENTS AND SEEK TO WEAKEN TURKEY. BY CONTRAST, A MAOIST EDITORIALIST HAS CHIDED "HURRIYET" FOR OFFERING RED HERRINGS WHICH COVER UP THE ACTIVITIES OF "SOVIET IMPERIALISM." THE SAME PAPER SAYS THE "HURRIYET" CAMPAIGN IS A SOVIET-BACKED CONSPIRACY TO SPOIL TURKISH-IRANIAN RELATIONS. SPEAKING PRIVATELY, TURKISH DIPLOMATS SAY THEY DO NOT KNOW THE SOURCE OF "HURRIYET'S" INFORMATION, MOST OF WHICH IS APPARENTLY NOT FACTUAL. FONMIN OKCUN HAS PUBLICALLY DENIED IRANIAN INVOLVEMENT IN SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES IN TURKEY. THE "HURRIYET" SERIES HAS PLAYED ON TURKISH FEARS OF FOREIGN INTERFERENCE IN ITS INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND MAY HAVE STRAINED TURKISH-IRANIAN RELATIONS, WHICH NEW AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE TO IRAN SAYS TURKEY GENUINELY WANTS TO SEE IMPROVED. END SUMMARY.

2. RECENT PRESS REPORTS IN MAOIST "AYDINLIK" AND MASS APPEAL "HURRIYET" THAT CLASHES BETWEEN THE FORCES OF BARZANI AND TALABANI HAVE TAKEN PLACE NEAR HAKKARI IN SOUTHEASTERN TURKEY AND NEWS OF VISITS TO THE AREA BY PRIMIN ECEVIT, MINISTER OF INTERIOR OZAYDINLI, AND CHIEF OF THE TURKISH GENERAL STAFF EVREN HAVE CONVINCED THE TURKISH PUBLIC THAT SERIOUS DISTURBANCES MAY BE TAKING PLACE. AFTER INSPECTING MILITARY UNITS IN THE SOUTHEAST, GENERAL EVREN REPORTEDLY SAID THAT SEPARATIST ACTIVITIES WILL BE PREVENTED AND THAT THE TURKISH ARMED FORCES ARE PREPARED IF CALLED UPON. MININT OZAYDINLI HAS

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PROMISED TO MAKE A MAJOR STATEMENT ON THIS ISSUE JUNE 21. THE FOLLOWING IS PROVIDED AS BACKGROUND ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS WHICH HAVE CREATED OFFICIAL CONCERN ABOUT THE ACTIVITIES OF KURDS IN TURKEY.

3. WHILE TURKS READILY ADMIT THAT KURDS DO EXIST IN TURKEY, BY TRADITION THEY ARE RELUCTANT TO DISCUSS PROBLEMS IN THE KURDISH COMMUNITY AND ARE SENSITIVE TO OUTSIDERS SHOWING INTEREST IN KURDS, WHO MAKE UP AT LEAST TEN PERCENT OF TURKEY'S POPULATION. TURKISH SENSITIVITY HAS A SOUND HISTORICAL BASIS IN THE SERIOUS SEPARATIST MOVEMENT OF THE 1920'S WHICH WAS QUELLED ONLY WITH GREAT DIFFICULTY. THIS SENSITIVITY HAS BEEN KEPT ALIVE BY INCIPIENT THREATS IN RECENT YEARS THAT THE MOVEMENT WOULD BE REVIVED AND BY THE OBJECT LESSON OF FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT WITH THE KURDISH REVOLT AGAINST THE IRAQI REGIME IN THE EARLY 1970'S. RECENTLY, HOWEVER, THE PRESS (WHICH HAS FAITHFULLY ABSERVED A VIRTUAL TABOO) AGAINST DISCUSSING KURDS) AS WELL AS TURKISH POLITICIANS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC HAVE BEGUN OPENLY TO DISCUSS PROBLEMS IN SOUTHEASTERN TURKEY WHERE MOST OF TURKEY'S KURDS LIVE. THE PUBLIC MOST OFTEN TALKS ABOUT THE KURDS AS AN ELEMENT IN TURKEY'S CONTINUING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE; THE PRESS, THOUGH, HAS BEGUN TO FOCUS ON THE

POSSIBILITY OF RENEWED KURDISH SEPARATISM AND INCURSIONS INTO
TURKEY BY RIVAL BARZANI AND TALABANI FORCES.

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4. THE "HURRIYET" CRUSADE. "HURRIYET'S" SERIES BEGAN ON
JUNE 9 WITH ACCUSATIONS THAT A KURDISH SEPARATIST ORGANIZATION
CALLED KAWA IS RESPONSIBLE FOR A CAR BOMBING IN ISTANBUL
WHICH SERIOUSLY INJURED A TURKISH MILITARY JUDGE, YASAR DEGERLI,
WHO WAS ALLEGEDLY INVESTIGATING KAWA'S ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES.
THE FOLLOWING DAY "HURRIYET" REPORTED THAT KAWA HAS LINKS
WITH TIKKO (TURKIYE ISCI KOYLU KURTULUS ORDUSU -- TURKISH WORKERS'
AND PEASANTS' LIBERATION ARMY), A VIOLENCE-PRONE, RADICAL LEFTIST
GROUP WHOSE MEMBERS, ACCORDING TO A RECENT PRESS ACCOUNT,
ARE ALEVI KURDS.

5. "HURRIYET" BANNER HEADLINE JUNE 11 SAID MIT (NATIONAL
INTELLIGENCE ORGANIZATION) HAS CUT ITS LIAISON RELATIONSHIP
WITH SAVAK BECAUSE OF SAVAK'S SUPPORT FOR KAWA (COMMENT:
TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE, THIS IS NOT TRUE. END COMMENT.)
ALLEGEDLY QUOTING FROM A TURKISH INTELLIGENCE REPORT, "HURRIEYT"
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ASSERTED THAT KURDISH-LANGUAGE WALL POSTERS AND BROCHURES APPEARING IN TURKEY RECENTLY WERE PRINTED IN IRAN AND SECRETLY BROUGHT HERE. "HURRIYET" ADDED SAVAK HAS CLOSE TIES WITH SEPARATIST GROUPS AND HAS PARTICIPATED IN SECRET MEETINGS OF KURDS, ARMENIANS, AND GREEKS OUTSIDE TURKEY.

6. ON JUNE 12 "HURRIYET" ALLEGED THAT THE SHAH OF IRAN IS THE "ARCHITECT OF SEPARATIST ACTIVITIES IN TURKEY" BECAUSE HE IS LOSING HIS GRIP ON POWER AND TRYING TO DIVERT THE ATTENTION OF HIS PEOPLE WITH FOREIGN ADVENTURES. THE JUNE 12 STORY, TITLED "IRAN WANTS TO UPSET THE FRIENDSHIP OF 400 YEARS," CONCLUDED WITH A STATEMENT FROM FONMIN OKCUN THAT "THIS SUBJECT IS VERY SENSITIVE, AND IT WILL NOT BE APPROPRIATE TO SAY ANYTHING BEFORE A DETAILED STUDY IS MADE AND THE FACTS ESTABLISHED."

7. PRINTING A LARGE COLOR PHOTOGRAPH PURPORTING TO SHOW KURDISH FORCES OPERATING IN THE KAKKARI REGION OF SOUTHEASTERN TURKEY, "HURRIYET" ON JUNE 18 REPORTED CONTINUING CLASHES BETWEEN BARZANI AND TALABANI ELEMENTS ON TURKISH TERRITORY. THE ARTICLE CONTENDS THAT BARZANI FORCES RECEIVE BACKING FROM AND ARE ACCOMPANIED BY AGENTS OF SAVAK AND THE CIA. THE TALABANI FORCES, ALLEGEDLY ARMED WITH CHINESE-MADE WEAPONS, ARE, ACCORDING TO "HURRIYET", BACKED BY SOVIET (KGB) AND SYRIAN AGENTS AND HAVE THE SUPPORT OF KAWA WHICH HAS BROKEN ITS TIES WITH SAVAK.

8. EDITORIAL REACTION. IN ADDITION TO EDITORIALS IN "HURRIYET", WRITERS IN THE LEFTIST PAPERS "CUMHURIYET" AND "YENI ULUS" HAVE COMMENTED ON "HURRIYET'S" ALLEGATIONS AND USED THIS OPPORTUNITY TO LASH OUT AGAINST ALLEGED ACTIVITIES OF CIA, SAVAK, MIT, AND BRITISH AND ISRAELI INTELLIGENCE SERVICES IN TURKEY. PARTICULARLY CRITICAL OF THE SHAH OF IRAN, CONFIDENTIAL

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THESE EDITORIALISTS CLAIM THE ALLEGED IRANIAN ACTIVITIES IN TURKEY ARE AIMED AT THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PERSIAN EMPIRE AT TURKEY'S EXPENSE.

9. CONSERVATIVE, OPPOSITION "SON HAVADIS" EDITORIAL ALSO COMMENTS ON INCIDENTS IN SOUTHEASTERN TURKEY. TYING ASSASSINATIONS OF TURKISH DIPLOMATS TOGETHER WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND KURDISH UNREST, THE EDITORIALIST WARNS PRIMIN ECEVIT HE MUST REALIZE "THE ROOTS OF ANARCHY ARE FROM OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY, NOT FROM WITHIN." ACCUSING THE SOVIET UNION OF DUPING THE WORLD WITH DETENTE, THE WRITER CLAIMS THE SOVIETS ARE CONTINUING THEIR SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES, AND ECEVIT SHOULD

NOT FALL INTO THEIR TRAPS.

10. THE MAOIST EVALUATION. IN REACTION TO THE "HURRIYET" CAMPAIGN AGAINST IRAN, COLUMNIST DOGU PERINCEK OF MAOIST DAILY "AYDINLIK" CHIDES "HURRIYET" FOR SINGLING OUT SAVAK. RIDICULING THOSE WHO STIMULATE TURKISH PARANOIA ABOUT THE NEW PERSIAN EMPIRE OR THE SO-CALLED GREEK QUEST FOR 'MEGALO IDEA., PERINCEK SAYS THESE ARE RED HERRINGS DESIGNED TO COVER THE ACTIVITIES OF "SOVIET IMPERIALISM" IN TURKEY. HE CONCLUDES, "TURKEY MUST UNITE WITH HER NEIGHBORS AGAINST THE GROWING DANGER OF SOCIALIST IMPERIALISM AND NOT ENGAGED IN NATIONALIST PROVOCATIONS."

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11. ON JUNE 18 AND 19 "AYDINLIK" CONTINUED TO COUNTER "HURRIYET" AND ALLEGED THAT THE "HURRIYET" CAMPAIGN WAS DESIGNED BY THE SOVIETS TO SPOIL TURKISH-IRANIAN RELATIONS. ACCORDING TO "AYDINLIK", THE SOVIETS, WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF AN UNNAMED NORTH AFRICAN COUNTRY (PRESUMABLY LIBYA), SEEK TO KEEP PRESSURE ON TURKEY BY CONTROLLING TURKISH ACCESS TO OIL AND WANT TO PREVENT THE RECENTLY RUMORED PROVISIO OF OIL TO TURKEY BY IRAN. "AYDINLIK" ALSO REPORTED A STATEMENT FROM THE LEADERSHIP OF KAWA DENYING IT IS AN ILLEGAL ORGANIZATION

AND CLAIMING THE SOVIETS ARE BEHIND "HURRIYET'S" RIDICULOUS ALLEGATIONS.

12. OFFICIAL REACTION. RESPONDING TO "HURRIYET'S" CAMPAIGN, ON JUNE 14 FONMIN OKCUN SAID REPORTS THAT IRAN IS ENGAGED IN SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES IN TURKEY ARE UNTRUE. HE ADDED THAT TURKEY HAS A LONG TRADITION OF FRIENDSHIP WITH IRAN AND
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WANTS TO DEVELOP RELATIONS TO A HIGHER LEVEL. TURKISH AMBASSADOR-
DESIGNATE TO IRAN, TURGUT TULUMEN, TOLD EMBOFFS HIS PRIMARY ROLE AS AMBASSADOR IN TEHRAN WILL BE TO CONVINCE IRAN THAT TURKEY WANTS CLOSE TIES.

13. EFFECTS OF THE "HURRIYET" CAMPAIGN. WHILE MOST OF THE ALLEGATIONS MADE BY "HURRIYET" IN ITS SERIES DO NOT APPEAR TO BE FACTUAL, THE ARTICLES HAVE HIGH-LIGHTED A WIDELY HELD TURKISH FEAR THAT IRAN SUPPORTS KURDISH SEPARATIST ACTIVITIES HERE. TURKS HAVE FOR SOME TIME BELIEVED THAT IRAN BACKS THE KURDS IN ORDER TO KEEP TURKEY WEAK AND PREVENT TURKEY'S STIRRING UP ETHNIC TURKS IN IRAN TO UNDERMINE THE SHAH'S REGIME. AS A RESULT, THE "HURRIYET" SERIES HAS MERELY CONFIRMED IN MANY TURKS' MINDS SOMETHING THEY ALREADY "KNEW" WAS TRUE. FURTHERMORE, ARTICLES HAVE PLAYED ON TURKISH PARANOIA THAT THERE MUST BE A FOREIGN HAND BEHIND ALL OF THE COUNTRY'S PROBLEMS, AND THEY HAVE STIMULATED THE UNREALISTIC TURKISH BELIEF THAT THEIR COUNTRY IS SO STRATEGICALLY IMPORTANT TO FOREIGN POWERS THAT THEY ARE OPENLY COMPETING FOR POWER AND INFLUENCE HERE.

14. POSSIBLE MOTIVATION FOR SERIES. TURKISH AMBASSADOR-
DESIGNATE TO IRAN, TURGUT TULUMEN, TOLD EMBOFFS TURKISH BUREAUCRACY IS MYSTIFIED ABOUT POSSIBLE SOURCE OF "HURRIYET" ARTICLES. OFFICIAL SPECULATION CURRENTLY IS CENTERED ON TWO POSSIBILITIES:

- A SOVIET 'BLACK PROPAGANDA' CAMPAIGN DESIGNED TO COVER ITS ACTIVITIES AMONG TURKISH KURDS, OR
- AN EFFORT BY ELEMENTS OF THE IRANIAN OPPOSITION WHO HAVE "BOUGHT" "HURRIYET".

A THIRD POSSIBLE SOURCE, ACCORDING TO A TURKISH STRINGER FOR "LE MONDE", IS RETIRING MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE
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ORGANIZATION (MIT) WHO ARE ALLEGEDLY PROVIDING INFORMATION TO "HURRIYET" AS A REWARD FOR PAST SUPPORT WHEN THE ORGANIZATION

CAME UNDER PUBLIC ATTACK.

15. COMMENT: NO MATTER WHAT THE SOURCE, "HURRIYET" HAS SUCCEEDED IN SENSATIONALIZING A PREVIOUSLY TABOO SUBJECT AND CREATING A POTENTIALLY CONTENTIOUS ISSUE BETWEEN TURKEY AND IRAN. OFFICIALLY, HOWEVER, THE IRANIAN AMBASSADOR HAS TOLD US HIS GOVERNMENT IS NOT RESPONDING IN A FORMAL WAY TO "HURRIYET'S" PROVOCATIONS, AND THE GOT THROUGH FONMIN OKCUN HAS REFERRED TO THE "TRADITIONAL FRIENDSHIP" BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT RELATIONS CAN BE IMPROVED. WHILE IT IS TOO EARLY TO ASSESS THE TOTAL IMPACT OF "HURRIYET'S" CAMPAIGN, IT IS CLEAR THE PAPER HAS STIMULATED A PUBLIC DEBATE ON POSSIBLE KURDISH SEPARATIST ACTIVITIES IN SOUTHEASTERN TURKEY AND MADE THE PUBLIC AWARE THAT DISTURBANCES IN TURKEY'S POOREST REGION ARE MORE SERIOUS THAN MOST TURKS HAVE BEEN WILLING TO ADMIT.
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